

May 2006

May Temperatures: The final month of spring featured near normal temperatures with subnormal precipitation across the local area. Temperature departures were -0.5°F at DCA, +0.4°F at BWI and +0.5°F at IAD. While Washington recorded its first month with subnormal readings since December, BWI and IAD continued their stretch with five consecutive months of warmer than normal temperatures. Readings were generally below normal except for the first 6 and the final 5 days. May started with highs reaching at or above 80°F in many areas from the 4th-6th, but temperatures then dropped with maximums no higher than the 70's for the next 20 days. The month's coolest weather occurred on the 8th when highs only reached the 50's at most locations (54°F at IAD). Memorial Day weekend through the 31st featured the warmest weather of the season; all three major airports recorded not only their first 90°F of the year but also their first 95°F reading of 2006. The heat resulted in some scattered power outages across the area, according to press reports. The abnormal warmth resulting in near-normal to slightly above normal monthly temperatures at most locations.

May Precipitation: After a wet April, May returned to the drier than normal pattern for 2006. Most locations received between 1.50"- 2.25", about half the normal total. Monthly totals (DCA, 2.21"; BWI, 1.60"; and IAD, 1.80") were well below normal (see highlights). DCA recorded its driest May since 2002; IAD and BWI, since 1991. The month's major storm system occurred on the 11th when evening thunderstorms generated one to two inches of rain and gusty winds across most of the local area. Severe thunderstorms produced three tornadoes (F0: winds up to 73 mph) south of Washington in Spotsylvania County, VA. The first tornado touched down near Martins Corner, VA, producing damage, mainly to trees, along a 5 mile path. The storm also produced another tornado in the Fredericksburg Spotsylvania Military Park, damaging trees along its 1 mile path. A third tornado was spawned from a storm cell north of Falmouth, along Interstate 95, north of Route 17. The twister resulted in more tree damage along its 300 yards long and 50 yards wide path. In many areas this was the only thunderstorm event, well below the monthly normal of five storms at DCA.

MAY 2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr. to Date
National (DCA)	74.9	55.2	65.1	65.6	-0.5	95/30	45/1	2.21	3.82	-1.61	11.07
Baltimore (BWI)	75.0	51.7	63.3	62.9	+0.4	95/30	38/1	1.60	3.89	-2.29	11.18
Dulles (IAD)	74.5	51.0	62.8	62.3	+0.5	95/30	40/1*	1.80	4.22	-2.42	11.51
Andrews (ADW)	74.0	53.0	63.5	N/A	N/A	90/30	41/1	2.51	4.00	-1.49	Missing

Other Occurrences: *20

Spring (March-May) Temperatures featured above normal temperatures. Seasonal temperature departures ranged between +1.4°F and +2.3°F at the three major airports, yielding the 5th warmest spring on record at IAD and 8th warmest at BWI. March started the season with temperatures slightly above normal at all three airports. Most of March featured temperatures at or below normal, but two periods brought well above normal readings. The month's extreme maximum temperature was observed on March 14 with highs at DCA, 85°F, BWI; 84°F; and IAD, 85°F. March was followed by the second warmest April ever recorded at IAD (5th at BWI and 11th in Washington). Monthly temperature departures between +3°F and +5°F were common across the local area including the three major airports. The growing season began early with many trees and flowers blossoming several weeks ahead of schedule. The month's only freezing temperatures occurred in the outer suburbs on the 10th, when IAD recorded a low of 31°F. May continued the trend of above normal temperatures, except slightly below normal temperatures in Washington. (See above).

Spring Precipitation: The season featured one of the driest March through May periods ever recorded in the local area. March kicked off with record dryness across the Washington/Baltimore area. Precipitation totals in March were less than 0.25" across the region, resulting in the driest March *ever* recorded at all three major airports. March was the 4th driest month *ever* recorded in Washington and at BWI. The month was the 3rd driest month on record at IAD. On March 16, dry weather contributed to a three-alarm blaze destroyed two landmark restaurants on Solomon's Island, MD, according to press reports. Several hundred brush fires ignited in Maryland and Virginia as a result of dry conditions, according to press reports. In April, precipitation totals were above normal throughout most of the area, including the three major airports. DCA and BWI recorded monthly precipitation surpluses of about 1/3"; IAD reported a surplus of 1.64", primarily the result of drenching rains on April 22. Monthly precipitation totals were as low as 2" in the West Virginia panhandle and above 6" in areas impacted by the storm on the 22nd. Two thunderstorm outbreaks brought hail: the first storm on April 3 brought hail measuring 1/4" to 1/2" at many locations and the second event a week later, brought hail up to 1.5", pelting Stafford, Fredericksburg and King George counties in Virginia, and Charles County, MD. A major storm on April 22 resulted in numerous flood warnings as high water closed roads and caused some street flooding in Old Town Alexandria, VA, and resulted in a water rescue in Montgomery County, MD, according to press reports. Rainfall totals reached 4.08" in Gaithersburg, MD, and set a daily precipitation record at IAD (2.88") for the date. May brought a return to below normal rainfall. (See above.)

SPRING 2006 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In.)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml
National (DCA)	67.3	47.6	57.5	56.1	+1.4	95/30	28/19	5.36	10.19	-4.83
Baltimore (BWI)	67.0	44.0	55.4	53.3	+2.1	95/30	24/8	5.06	10.82	-5.76
Dulles (IAD)	67.1	43.5	55.3	53.0	+2.3	95/30	24/8	6.73	10.99	-4.26
Andrews (ADW)	(Seasonal ADW data not available due to data missing for March)									

Looking Ahead to June: Does a dry spring yield a dry summer? Listed below are the driest 10 springs and summers that followed. DCA normal summer total precipitation is 10.23"

Year	1986	1915	1969	1926	2006	1879	1925	1911	1885	1957	1987
Spring	3.47	4.15	4.51	5.08	5.36	5.71	5.71	6.03	6.09	6.36	6.36
Summer	10.41	16.79	19.88	11.36	?	14.01	9.24	16.29	12.82	6.51	8.56